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SUBJECT: SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS YADE'S CHIEF
OF STAFF OUTLINES PRIORITIES

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Pol M/C and Poloff met on September 25 with the Chief of Staff for the Secretary of State for Human Rights Brigitte Collet and Counselor Pierre Thenard to discuss Rama Yade's role and priorities in her newly created position, Yade's recent visit to Haiti, her upcoming visit to Washington, and French support for the Community of Democracies, biennial Ministerial in Bamako, Mali on November 15-17, 2007. Collet and Thenard related that Yade's regional focus would be on Asia and Latin America, with particular current interest in Burma and Haiti. Yade was heartened by recent international success in fighting crime and corruption in Haiti and hoped to expand opportunities for French/U.S. cooperation on the island during her visit to Washington on October 3-4. Collet said France planned to attend the October 1, 2007 meeting of Ministers held by Mali, the Chair the Community of Democracies (CD), but was not able to say whether the French government would be willing to provide additional support for the government of Mali's hosting of the biennial Ministerial in Bamako from November 15-17, 2007. End Summary.

YADE,S PRIORITIES

¶2. (SBU) Collet said that Yade,s work portfolio-she is the first Secretary of State for Human Rights-would be more oriented toward Asia and Latin America than Africa (which remains in the domain of the Secretary of State for Cooperation), with particular thematic emphasis on the rights of women and children, freedom of speech, and fighting impunity. Current countries of particular interest are Burma and Haiti. Collet added that Yade,s office was at that moment about to issue a press release condemning the recent crackdown against peaceful protests in Burma and reaffirming French support for the release of political prisoners (including, specifically, Aung San Suu Kyi). Collet also related the French government,s hope that the U.S would participate in an October 1 conference in New York focusing on child soldiers, sponsored in cooperation with UNICEF. Collet acknowledged that the U.S. might be constrained by juridical considerations and unable to support some conclusions of participants, but she hoped that such constraints would not preclude U.S. participation.

HAITI

¶3. (SBU) Collet related that Yade,s September 14-15 visit to Haiti had been very positive and that Yade hoped international cooperation and progress under the auspices of MINUSTAH would continue. Yade met with President Preval, other senior government representatives and civil society members, touring Port au Prince, Cap Hatien, and outlying areas. Thenard, who accompanied Yade, noted that, while everything is relative, the domestic situation is currently

better than at any time in the country's recent history. On September 15, Yade addressed a group of about 300: "For the first time in a long while and under the tutelage of President Preval, hope is being reborn in Haiti. I want to believe (in that hope) with all my strength and to work by your side to nurture it. Haiti has returned to the path of being a state governed by rule of law. The government and its parliament are the products of free elections, and they have the full support of the international community, including (that of) France, which will work at all levels (to help Haiti)." Collet also suggested the possibility of Nicolas Sarkozy visiting Haiti at an as-yet unspecified date, in what would be the first-ever visit to the island by a French president.

UPCOMING WASHINGTON VISIT

¶4. (SBU) Thenard said that Yade was eager to continue close collaboration with the U.S. on Haiti and that she intended to broach expanding cooperation during her upcoming visit to Washington on October 3-4. (Thenard mentioned that Haitian illegal immigrants were a problem in Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guyana.) During her visit to Washington, Collet said that Yade planned to have a series of consultations with officials from the State Department, the NSC and Congress, to be facilitated by the French Embassy. Collet also mentioned possible meetings with a representative of the Dalai Lama and with Iranian immigrants living in the U.S.

COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES

¶5. (SBU) Finally, Collet noted that Rama Yade would represent France at the October 1, 2007 Ministers meeting of the Community of Democracies (CD) chaired by Mali, on the margins of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). Collet was not

able to say yet whether the French government would be willing to provide additional support for the Community of Democracies, specifically financial and logistical support for the government of Mali's hosting of the biennial Ministerial in Bamako from November 15-17, 2007.

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Stapleton